

# ORDER

## U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION WESTERN-PACIFIC REGION

WP 1600.32

10/25/02

### SUBJ: MANAGING POTENTIAL WORKPLACE VIOLENCE SITUATIONS

1. **PURPOSE.** This order establishes policies, procedures, and responsibilities that will help managers and supervisors be proactive in addressing inappropriate workplace and potentially escalating or dangerous behaviors.
2. **DISTRIBUTION.** This order is to be distributed to all members of the Western-Pacific FAA Regional Management Team, managers and supervisors in all divisions, staff offices, and all FAA field facilities within the region.
3. **APPLICABILITY.** The provisions of this order are applicable to all FAA Western-Pacific Region employees and support the FAA Western-Pacific Region's policy on Violence in the Workplace (Appendix 1).
4. **BACKGROUND.** As an employer, we in the FAA have an obligation to provide a safe and secure workplace for our employees and customers (Federal Managers Financial Integrity Act/Tort Liability). With the increased number of violent occurrences in the public and private sectors, it has become necessary to develop a comprehensive approach to the assessment and management of the potential for workplace violence within the FAA, Western-Pacific Region. National statistics support the contention that workplace violence, as an Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) issue, is approaching widespread proportions. Often, the potential for workplace violence is mitigated through a common-sense approach of prevention, recognition, assessment, and informed decision-making processes aimed at maintaining a safe, non-threatening work environment.
5. **IMPLEMENTATION.** Upon becoming aware of a potentially violent situation, managers and supervisors shall assess the need for intervention by applying the guidelines that are included in this section. Managers/supervisors shall coordinate through their supervisory chain to determine the need to notify the Regional Workplace Violence Support Team. These guidelines should not preclude immediate intervention or a common-sense approach to situation management. In the event of an emergency that precludes coordination through the parent division, the Western-Pacific Operations Center shall be notified immediately. Managers and supervisors are responsible for the following:
  - a. **Recognize.** The emergence of threat indicators normally precedes the actual act of violence. Although a profile cannot predict who will be the perpetrator of workplace violence, it can be used with other indicators and background information to help identify a potential problem. Management officials should become familiar with potential violent behaviors (Appendix 2). It is incumbent upon management to be sensitive to extreme employee behavior and to recognize that everyone involved in a potential violent situation may experience extreme feelings of fear, anger, guilt, and/or humiliation, coupled with a sense of vulnerability and incompetence to deal with the situation. Employees shall be referred to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) when the supervisor determines that a referral will not

exacerbate the situation. One of the keys to successful management of a potential violent situation is to avoid denial and address potential problems early. Appendix 3 identifies enabling behaviors that should be avoided when dealing with a potential violent employee or situation.

**b. Document.** Managers/supervisors should document the factual circumstances and events precipitating the emergence of a potential threat. It is important to document the basis for the threat in the event disciplinary action is necessary. They should continue to document the pertinent details and conversations for as long as the situation exists. All documents shall be held in strict confidence and shall be disposed of in accordance with FAA Order 1350.15X, Records Organization, Transfer, and Destruction Standards.

(1) Documenting the problem involves the initial organization of a case summary. It could involve coordination through the parent division, with the Aviation Security and Investigations Division, AWP-700, Human Resource Management Division, AWP-10, Regional Counsel, AWP-7, Aerospace Medicine Division, AWP-300, or others to develop full background information.

(2) The documentation process continues for the duration of the incident, to include an after-action assessment.

**c. Assess.** During the assessment process, supervisors should determine the seriousness of the situation. This process may require the division to consult with a variety of specialists, both inside and outside the FAA, prior to reaching a determination. Some aspects that are taken into consideration in the assessment process are the target/victim's accessibility, the individual's ability to carry out a threat, thoughts/emotions predisposing toward violence and the balance of stresses versus supports. If there is an imminent risk of violence, take immediate steps through available law enforcement agencies to defuse the situation.

**d. Confidentiality.** It is extremely important that all parties receiving information relative to a potential violent individual hold that information confidential, regardless of its source. Confidentiality is paramount to provide protection for all parties. Information shall be shared on a need-to-know basis.

**e. Threshold.** At this stage the supervisor(s) decides to either continue to monitor the situation, take corrective action, or request the assistance of the Regional Workplace Violence Support Team through the parent division.

**6. REGIONAL WORKPLACE VIOLENCE SUPPORT TEAM.** The Regional Workplace Violence Support Team will be convened at the request of the manager or designee from the division responsible for the affected facility. The Manager, Human Resource Management Division, AWP-10, will chair the team. Membership will include the division manager or designee from the parent division, Aviation Security and Investigations Division, AWP-700, Regional Counsel, AWP-7, and Aerospace Medicine Division, AWP-300. The team can be expanded and tailored to meet situational demands by including other divisions/staff offices as deemed appropriate in each instance by the management representative of the parent division and the AWP-10 Manager. Functions of the various members of the team may include, but are not limited to:

**a. Manager Representative of Parent Division.**

(1) Conducts the meeting of the team in managing the specific situation occurring within the organization.

- (2) Responsible for providing guidance and direction to the field facility manager/supervisor.
- (3) Coordinates the execution of all organizational decisions within a specific situation.

**b. Manager, Human Resource Management Division, AWP-10.**

- (1) Convenes the team at the request of the parent division.
- (2) Provides labor relations expertise.
- (3) Provides point of contact for Employee Assistance Program Services (EAP).
- (4) Provides conduct/discipline guidance.
- (5) Provides guidance relative to FAA's Accountability Board.
- (6) Provides guidance on personnel actions (reassignment, LWOP, Administrative leave, etc.).
- (7) Provides focal point for Benefits Counseling (TSP, medical retirement, etc).
- (8) Manages the Workers' Compensation Program.
- (9) Offers training alternatives.

**c. Manager, Aviation Security and Investigations Division, AWP-700**

- (1) Provides security awareness/procedures.
- (2) Manages access controls, in particular, in parking lots and at workstations.
- (3) Coordinates law enforcement notification.
- (4) Provides investigation/interviewing support (i.e., Reports of Investigation).
- (5) Checks database with the National Crime Information Center (NCIC).
- (6) Initiates background investigations Background Investigation/National Agency Check with Inquiries (BI/NACI).
- (7) Adjudicates security clearances information.
- (8) Conducts Facility/Risk/Threat/Vulnerability Assessments.
- (9) Issues identification badges.

**d. Aerospace Medicine Division, AWP-300**

- (1) Assesses need for medical evaluations.
- (2) Provides guidance on management of violent behaviors.

(3) Provides training to managers/supervisors.

(4) Serves as Medical Review Office.

**e. Regional Counsel, AWP-7**

(1) Provides legal counsel on relevant matters including potential agency liability regarding any actions proposed or taken.

(2) Coordinates with Assistant Chief Counsel (AGC-400)/US Attorney/local attorneys when appropriate.

(3) Provides litigation support.

**f. Regional Operations Center, AWP-6**

(1) Upon notification from FAA field elements, forwards to the management designee of the parent division any reports of potentially dangerous behavior and/or threats or acts of violence against individuals or groups of individuals located within the Western-Pacific Region.

**g. Others**

(1) As determined by the Regional Workplace Violence Support Team.

**7. EMPLOYEES.** All employees are responsible for notifying their supervisor immediately of any threat of violence or violent actions made by or toward any other employee(s). Employees must provide copies of any document pertaining to a temporary and/or permanent protective or restraining order that lists an FAA-occupied facility as a protected area.

**8. EDUCATION.** The Regional Flight Surgeon will oversee the development and delivery of Violence in the Workplace Awareness Training to all supervisors and managers. The Regional Workplace Violence Support Team will periodically assess the ongoing Violence in the Workplace training needs in order to maintain an effective level of awareness. Each organization division/staff office is responsible for communicating the Regional Workplace Violence Policy Statement contained in Appendix 1 to each employee.

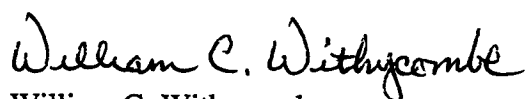
**9. POST ACTION DE-BRIEFING.** The Regional Workplace Violence Support Team should conduct a post-action review to develop lessons learned and refine team and individual responsibilities and responses. This provides an opportunity for each team member to report and share observations and experiences. Specific questions which should be addressed in reviewing process and procedures include, but are not limited to, the following:

a. Was the organization effective in dealing with the incident, or potential incident, of workplace violence?

b. What emergency notification occurred (e.g., local authorities, medical, fire, police, EAP)?

c. What assessment procedures were instituted to determine the immediate safety of the workplace and the effect of the incident on the workplace?

- d. What communication took place with employees in the facility? When did the communication take place?
- e. Was the news media involved and were they dealt with effectively?
- f. Was there any impact on operations at the facility?
- g. What were the "lessons learned"?



William C. Withycombe  
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**APPENDIX 1. WORKPLACE VIOLENCE POLICY STATEMENT****1. PURPOSE.** This appendix explains the Workplace Violence Policy Statement.

- a. With the increasing number of violent occurrences in the workplace across the country, there is a need to assess and manage the potential for violence within our region. It is the goal of the Western-Pacific Region of the Federal Aviation Administration to provide a safe and secure workplace, free from acts of threats of violence, and to respond effectively in the event that such acts or threats of violence do occur. The Western-Pacific Region will pursue the goal of a safe and secure workplace through awareness, education, and appropriate management actions to handle situations and follow-up.
- b. Acts of violence or threats of violence, whether direct or indirect, in the workplace will not be tolerated. Appropriate action will be pursued on all substantiated allegations.
- c. Any employee aware of such acts or threats should immediately inform their supervisor or, in an emergency situation after hours, contact the Regional Operations Center at (310) 725-3300.

## APPENDIX 2. WARNING SIGNALS OF POTENTIALLY VIOLENT BEHAVIOR

1. **PURPOSE.** This appendix describes warning signals for potentially violent behavior.

### 2. BEHAVIOR.

a. Certainly not everyone who demonstrates one or even several of these behaviors is potentially violent. As supervisors, you must exercise the best judgment in all of these situations. Common sense and concern for the safety of all individuals involved should be paramount in any decision you pursue.

b. Human behavior is unpredictable – we may never know what will “elicit” abnormal behavior in an individual. However, we do know that violent behavior rarely surfaces without warning. If a pattern becomes obvious to the extent that the work of the organization is being impacted, the Labor Relations Section of the Human Resource Management Division should be contacted, through the parent division for advice regarding intervention.

c. The following lists the most common characteristics identified by numerous authors and studies of violence in the workplace.

- (1) Non-communicative loner, with little or no social network.
- (2) Intimidation of others with implication(s) of harm.
- (3) Verbal and/or physical threats; harassing phone calls, etc.
- (4) Increasingly poor impulse control (hitting or striking a wall and/or person).
- (5) *Any* destructive behavior, even if minor (such as throwing a headset or tools, knocking over a trash can or desk, intentional damaging of Government equipment and/or furnishings, or smashing the time clock).
- (6) “Out of character” sudden changes in disposition, evasive or extremely hostile.
- (7) Disregard for the safety of coworkers.
- (8) Threatens to harm self or others (extreme or inappropriate criticism of others).
- (9) Noticeable changes in personal hygiene (low self-esteem).
- (10) Low threshold of tolerance of others.
- (11) Coworkers feel employee is capable of committing violent acts, comment on individual being “strange,” “wound too tight,” “a time bomb ready to go off.”
- (12) Consistently lies, exaggerates, overacts.
- (13) Repetitive anti-social acts (i.e., multiple arrests).
- (14) Extreme reaction to change, new policy, and/or procedures.
- (15) Moral righteousness and believing the agency is not following its rules and procedures.
- (16) Inflexible to hearing new ideas or suggestions, and may take them as criticism of their methods.
- (17) Receives minimally acceptable ratings.
- (18) Loss of interest with job with no viable options.
- (19) Feels frustrated or stymied in job.
- (20) Little or no job satisfaction.
- (21) Inability to take criticism of job performance, holding a grudge, especially against a supervisor; oftentimes verbalizing hope for something to happen to the person against whom the employee has the grudge.
- (22) Dramatic or sudden change in quality of work, work habits and performance (one extreme or another).

- (23) Severe mood swings (i.e., angers easily, verbally abusive to co-workers).
- (24) Perceived office pressure/job stress.
- (25) Blames others for failure and disappointments.
- (26) Perceived unfairness, injustice or malice in others that is not warranted.
- (27) Domestic problems (marital stress or separation).
- (28) History of substance abuse.
- (29) Knowledge of prior or recent medical condition, treatment, and/or medication(s).
- (30) History of violent episodes or criminal acts. Talks about killings/violent acts in the past or as if planning.
- (31) Expression of extreme desperation over recent personal, marital, family, financial or personal problems.
- (32) History of violence towards females, animals, and/or children.
- (33) Fondness for violent movies/television shows.
- (34) Fascination with weapons.
- (35) Carrying a concealed weapon or flashing a weapon to test reactions.
- (36) Fascination with incidents of workplace violence.

### APPENDIX 3. DO'S AND DON'TS (ENABLING BEHAVIORS)

This appendix lists both the do's and don'ts of enabling behaviors.

1. **DO's.** An employee may be more responsive with verbal or visual reinforcers. Attention getters and suggestions include:

- a. Document information and activities when they happen. Use simple language in the notes for the record. Keep it simple.
- b. Obtain written information from witnesses.
- c. Consult and obtain guidance from management staff and threat assessment team.
- d. Be specific with your feedback (i.e., tardiness, missed deadline(s), unexcused absences from the office).
- e. Focus on behavior – do not try to label or diagnose.
- f. Define specific expectations or changes.
- g. Emphasize seriousness of the inappropriate behavior or situation.

2. **DON'Ts.** There are many things that managers and supervisors do that prolong the behavior or situation. Remember it is the employee's problem to solve --allow for natural and logical consequences to action(s). The following list of actions should be avoided.

- a. Covering up the employee's mistakes.
- b. Making excuses for the employee's behavior.
- c. Avoiding dealing with the problem because of the employee's age, gender, or race.
- d. Refusing to listen to coworkers' complaints about the employee.
- e. Failing to keep a written record of unusual behavior or performance problems.
- f. Excusing the employee's verbally abusive language.
- g. Attempting to provide counsel to the employee rather than referring him/her to a professional or EAP.
- h. Failing to take disciplinary action.
- i. Failing to keep EAP or Human Resource Management professionals informed of an employee's problem through proper channels.
- j. Allowing or ignoring the use of alcohol and/or drugs in the workplace.
- k. Attempting to handle the problem internally without accessing expert guidance.